



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ASSIMILATION OF NATIONALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES. II.

Influence of Social Environment.

HERBERT SPENCER has made the remark that the earlier stages of social evolution are much more dependent upon local conditions than the later. Primitive man was at the mercy, so to speak, of the physical environment. With his feeble appliances and weak intelligence he was unable successfully to combat the adverse influences of climate, of habitat, of the savage beasts and noxious plants which threatened existence itself. Civilized man has reduced nature to subjection, at least to a certain extent. He can withstand the extremes of heat and cold ; he has domesticated the useful and exterminated the dangerous beasts ; he brings the soil under cultivation ; in the bosom of the earth he seeks treasures which were unknown to his ancestors ; and he devises means of communication over land and sea. He can, consequently, choose his place of dwelling and adapt himself to apparently unfriendly surroundings. The effect of physical environment is obscured and in many cases doubtless neutralized by these artificial contrivances for the promotion of living.

As societies progress a new set of factors come in to modify them. Among these Spencer notes the influence of the super-organic environment — the action and reaction of neighboring societies on one another and the accumulation of super-organic products. Among these latter are material appliances, tools, machinery and buildings ; language, the development of knowledge, science ; and finally, customs and opinions developing into creeds, mythologies, theologies, cosmogonies, systems of law, ethical codes, institutions and social sentiments. These

form together an immensely-voluminous, immensely-complicated and immensely-powerful set of influences . . . They gradually form

what we may consider either as a non-vital part of society itself, or else as an additional environment, which eventually becomes even more important than the original environments — so much more important that there arises the possibility of carrying on a high type of social life under inorganic and organic conditions which originally would have prevented it.¹

The circumstances under which mixture of nationalities has occurred in the United States leaves no room for doubt that the influence of the social environment is one that must be reckoned with. The original colonists were men armed with the appliances and resources of civilization, trained by centuries of organized social life, with tradition, history, language, literature, religion and settled customs, and with strongly marked social ideals and aspirations. Many of the first settlers came in order that they might carry out peculiar religious and political modes of thought and living, or at least that they might be freed from creeds and systems that were distasteful to them. In this country they found an unexampled opportunity to establish and to cultivate their own system, which in turn left a deep impress upon the customs and character of their descendants. It is impossible that the institutions thus developed should not have had a powerful influence during the further expansion of the country westward after the formation of the Union. It is equally impossible that they should not have influenced the immigrants who assisted in that expansion. These immigrants, it is true, brought their own customs and habits of life and may have influenced in turn the institutions of the native Americans. The result has been a modification of character and institutions due to the mixture of nationalities under the influence of social environment. How are we to conceive of the influence of this social environment and how are we to trace and define its effect?

In the first place the remarks which were made in the previous article² in regard to the peculiar circumstances connected with the mixture of nationalities in this country are

¹ *Principles of Sociology*, I, pp. 14 and 15.

² See this *QUARTERLY* for September, pp. 432 *et seq.*

to be repeated, only with greater emphasis. Since there has been no conquest of one nationality by another, but all have stood on equal terms, and since the immigrants have come individually, without political organization, the social environment, even more than the physical, has had free play. National and race prejudices have prevented no body of immigrants from adopting the habits and customs of their new home. To many this has been the land of refuge and of promise, and they have readily and gladly substituted the new habits for the old, which reminded them only of past conditions of inferiority, if not of tyranny and oppression. No tradition has induced the succeeding generations to regard their ancestral customs as a sacred heritage to be preserved in a hostile land or in the presence of a strange people. The descendants have as a rule been glad to throw off peculiarities of speech and manner which distinguished them from the native Americans. These influences cannot be overestimated.

There is another parallel which must not be overlooked in this connection. Just as in the case of physical environment the constant struggle of the process of settlement which took on the form of "frontier life" was a universal and continuous assimilating force working on all the colonists and the successive immigrants, so in the case of the social environment we have a continuous and pervasive force which has had a similar influence. The early colonists were mostly English, and during the period of colonization the English language and English political institutions were fixed in a position from which they have never been dislodged. With the Revolution and the adoption of the constitution, this position was still further confirmed, and no one has been able to doubt that we are an English-speaking nation with representative institutions and a legal system largely after the English model. No immigration, however large and powerful, has ever been able to affect this position for an instant. The result has been that the succeeding tides of immigrants have cherished no thought of making their institutions dominant, but have simply fallen into the mould already prepared and have received its imprint. This

dominance of English institutions has been a force of enormous importance. There has never been a struggle in regard to the fundamental principles of the form of government. All comers have been received freely, but with the tacit understanding that they acquiesced in these principles.

The process of mixture, then, has not been so much a mingling of institutions as an assimilation to the institutions already existing. Different nationalities may have offered greater or less obstacles to the process, and in some cases it may have been only partially successful; yet it has never been a contest between two distinct systems, but always a progress with greater or less rapidity towards the already-established system, which we may call the American. And this is the character of the problem at the present time, and defines precisely the method which must be pursued in trying to determine the assimilating influence of the social environment. We have but two questions to ask: first, What is the nature of this social environment of which we speak, and what chance has it of exerting its influence? and second, Have we any means of testing whether it is exerting its influence or not?

It is impossible to enumerate all the elements in what we call social environment. One very powerful influence is that of education, including the use of the common language, the power of the newspaper, and of popular literature and the drama. The next is the exercise of political rights, including voting, office-holding and participation in jury duty, the town-meeting, party organization, *etc.* Then there are other social influences more subtle and more difficult to define. Such are those which arise from participation in the holding of property, from the general expectation of self-reliance and independence in every individual, from public opinion in regard to ethical conduct—such as the treatment of women and children, from the honorable position of labor, from the absence of aristocracy and distinctions of rank, from the Puritan traditions in regard to Sunday observance. In all these directions we should ask whether the American influence has had a favorable chance to make itself felt, and whether we have any means of measuring

the result. It would be a long task to follow out all these lines, and I shall confine myself to one or two simply as examples.

Education as an Assimilating Influence.—The assimilating influence of education is commonly dwelt upon with great emphasis in discussing the question how the United States is able to receive such a mass of foreigners, many of them not speaking the English language when they come, and many of them destitute of the elements of knowledge in their own language. It is an important question, in the first place, how receptive these foreign elements are to the influence of our educational institutions, our newspapers, our public discussions and our literature. They will be receptive in proportion as they already speak the English language, and thus have one serious obstacle to assimilation out of the way; in proportion as they come from countries which have a high standard of education and intelligence; and in proportion as they are of an age to profit by our educational advantages and to be susceptible to new influences. A census of general intelligence is out of the question. Can we in any way get statistical indices sufficiently clear to lead us to a valid judgment about these points?

Of the immigrants to this country, all those from Great Britain and Ireland may safely be put down as speaking the English language, while a portion of those from British North America also speak English. Out of 15,427,657 immigrants who arrived here from 1820 to 1890, 6,235,237, or forty per cent, were put down as coming from Great Britain and Ireland; while there were 1,046,875, or 6.79 per cent, put down as coming from British North America. It may safely be said that from forty to forty-five per cent of our immigrants have been able to speak the English language, and to that extent have been receptive to our civilization. It has often been pointed out, however, that this proportion of immigrants from Great Britain is constantly decreasing. During the decade 1870-80, the proportion from Great Britain and Ireland was only 35.03 per cent of the total, and during the decade

1880-90 it was only 27.88 per cent. The proportion from British North America was still 7.49 per cent, but that immigration was very largely composed of French Canadians. In 1891, the proportion of immigrants from Great Britain and Ireland was less than twenty-two per cent of the total, and those from British North America by land were no longer reported. The difficulty of assimilation owing to difference in language is growing greater every decade, and is increased by the fact that there is a large number of each nationality already here with whom the new immigrant can speak his own language. It is no longer necessary that he acquire a new language in order to make his wants known and be able to live in comfort. He finds associates in business, in church, in school and in social intercourse, all of whom use his own tongue. There are communities in America — agricultural townships or parts of large cities — where a man can live a lifetime without needing to speak English. They are veritable foreign communities in the midst of the United States. It is quite impossible that this should continue, for the dissolving influence of American life reaches these communities in the second generation.

It is hardly fair to regard a knowledge of the English language as the sole test of the fitness of the immigrant to assimilate with the American element, or even as a conclusive test of the ease and quickness with which this assimilation may go on. There are many immigrants of foreign speech who are more intelligent than others who are able to speak English. It is well known that while illiteracy is comparatively high among the Irish, it is very low among the Germans, the Swiss, the Swedes and the Norwegians. On the other hand, illiteracy is common among the Italians, the Hungarians and other nations of southern Europe. The immigration from Germany now (1880-90) represents 27.70 per cent of the total immigration; that from Norway and Sweden, 10.84 per cent; and that from Switzerland, 1.56 per cent. The greater part of this consists of persons who have received elementary school instruction, whatever value that may have in making them more intelligent in adapting themselves to their new

surroundings. It is to be noted that the immigration from countries where illiteracy is high is increasing both absolutely and relatively. This is particularly the case with Italy.

There is one other aspect of this question of assimilation of foreign elements by education of which not much notice has been taken, but which is important. We trust to our common-school system to reach these foreigners, to teach them the English language, to make them intelligent and to prepare them for political power. We do not think of this system as affecting the immigrants directly, for they are too old to go to school; but we expect it to reach the second generation. It is an important question, now, to what extent this second generation is present, and in what proportion it stands to the immigrant element proper which the schools never reach. In ascertaining these facts we can learn both the magnitude of the task imposed upon our educational system, and the extent to which the foreign elements are susceptible to its influence. It is through the children that education must come, and the reactive effect on the parents is greater according as the number of the second generation exceeds that of the first. I have thought this clew worth following out, for it may afford us some index of the conditions of the problem, namely, the assimilation of the foreign-born through the common schools.

The eleventh census gives us the number of foreign-born white persons of school age, that is, from five to seventeen years, both inclusive. That, deducted from the total number of the foreign-born, gives us the number who are too old to profit by the common schools. Thus out of 9,121,867 foreign-born whites in the United States in 1890, 917,475 were of school age, leaving 8,204,392 above the school age.¹

To contrast with these foreign-born who have never submitted to the influence of education in this country, we have the 11,503,675² native whites of foreign parentage, who either have had or are now having the advantage of education here.

¹ This number is not quite accurate, because it includes those under five years of age. In 1880 this number was only one per cent of the total number of the foreign-born.

² Of these, 4,400,105 were of school age, i.e., from five to seventeen.

To these must be added the 917,475 foreign-born of school age, making 12,421,150 to contrast with the 8,332,072. This shows the magnitude of the task of education we have before us, and also the proportionate part of the foreign element which is accessible, so to speak, to the influence we are trying to bring to bear on them. The proportion is widely different in different parts of the country, and reveals the greatest variety of problems offered by the presence of the foreign-born. Some of the principal points may be considered in connection with the table on the opposite page.

The percentages in this table are intended to show the progress that has been made in bringing the foreign population of the United States under the influence of education. It does not show how far the foreign element takes advantage of the opportunity of education, or how far this education is effective in accomplishing its work. That can be only a matter of observation, or at best of statistics of illiteracy. But it is important to know how far an opportunity is offered to reach these masses which we wish to assimilate. The facts disclosed here are in some respects very curious.

The proportion of native whites of foreign parentage plus the foreign whites of school age (the schooled and schoolable) to the foreign-born whites above the school age, for the whole of the United States, is as 151.39 to 100. This would seem to show that the foreign element is in a controllable position—a position where we can bring the influence of our educational system to bear upon it. As time goes on this proportion should increase; for the foreign-born population is constantly decreased by deaths and the native population of foreign parentage is constantly increasing. The countervailing force is immigration, which, as it holds its own or increases, constantly adds to the adult foreign-born population which never has been, nor can be, subjected to the assimilating influence of education in this country.

Comparing the two sections of the country where the foreign element is strongest, the North Atlantic Division and the North Central Division, we are astonished to find that the

	1. FOREIGN-BORN WHITES.	2. FOREIGN-BORN WHITES OF SCHOOL AGE.	3. FOREIGN-BORN WHITES OF ABOVE SCHOOL AGE.	4. NATIVE WHITES OF FOREIGN PARENTAGE.	5. SCHOoled AND SCHOOLABLE.	6. NUMBER OF SCHOoled AND SCHOOLABLE TO TOO UNsCHOOLed.	
THE UNITED STATES	9,121,867	917,475	8,204,392	11,503,675	12,421,150	151,39	U. S.
NORTH ATLANTIC DIVISION . . .	3,874,866	394,422	3,480,444	4,355,710	4,750,132	136,48	N. AT. DIV.
Maine	78,695	12,837	65,858	73,865	86,702	131,64	Me.
New Hampshire	72,190	12,544	59,652	50,015	62,359	104,87	N. H.
Vermont	44,024	4,811	39,213	62,149	66,960	170,75	Vt.
Massachusetts	63,350	7,184	58,139	60,640	68,304	116,61	Mass.
Rhode Island	106,027	14,429	91,598	94,282	108,711	118,68	R. I.
Connecticut	183,155	18,462	104,693	193,048	211,510	128,42	Conn.
New York	1,565,692	139,951	1,425,741	1,837,453	1,977,404	138,69	N. Y.
New Jersey	327,885	32,303	295,682	371,878	404,181	136,69	N. J.
Pennsylvania	843,589	87,401	756,188	1,066,580	1,153,981	152,60	Pa.
<hr/>							
NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION . . .	4,053,457	431,240	3,622,217	5,608,315	6,039,555	166,73	N. C. DIV.
Ohio	418,553	38,065	420,488	791,735	829,800	197,34	Ohio.
Indiana	146,003	97,14	136,289	302,735	312,449	229,25	Ind.
Illinois	810,975	87,902	733,883	1,044,804	1,131,896	156,36	Ill.
Michigan	541,001	70,887	470,714	613,590	684,477	145,41	Mich.
Wisconsin	518,989	54,117	464,872	726,835	780,952	167,99	Wis.
Minnesota	407,057	56,541	410,516	518,151	574,659	139,98	Minn.
Iowa	324,282	31,167	323,765	513,187	544,354	185,93	Iowa.
Missouri	154,07	15,087	219,195	437,699	452,786	206,56	Mo.
North Dakota	81,348	14,403	66,945	63,347	77,750	116,14	N. Dak.
South Dakota	90,843	12,761	78,082	109,215	121,976	156,21	S. Dak.
Nebraska	205,44	25,697	176,447	250,420	276,117	156,39	Neb.
Kansas	147,630	157,09	131,921	236,597	252,306	191,25	Kan.

former is much below the percentage for the whole country and the latter is as much above. In the East there are only 136.48 schooled and schoolable for 100 foreign-born above the school age; while in the West the proportion is 166.73 to 100. We are apt to think of the Western population as composed largely of immigrants of recent years. This comparison, showing apparently that the newly-come foreign element is stronger proportionately in the East than in the West, throws a different light on the task of assimilation which the two sections have before them. The West already has a decided majority of the foreign element at an age when it can be successfully dealt with by the assimilating power of schooling, while the East has a large body of adult foreigners to deal with. A closer examination of the Eastern states discloses the reason for this.

Vermont is an example of a state where immigration has worked its mission and ceased. She is in that second stage where we have for years imagined that the whole of the United States would arrive, namely, that of the dominance of immigrants' children, who, as a result of their birth on American soil, have been subjected to the dissolving influence of American life. There are 170.75 of the schooled and schoolable to 100 of the foreign-born above the school age. *A priori* we should have expected the other New England states to be in the same condition. Maine shows a slight inclination in that direction; but all the other states are in an entirely different position. New Hampshire, for instance, presents the appearance of a state where the immigration is of recent date, the numbers of the two classes being almost the same (104.87 to 100). Next to New Hampshire comes Massachusetts, where, owing to the strength of the recent immigration, the proportion of the schooled and schoolable to the foreign-born above the school age is as 116.61 to 100. Rhode Island and Connecticut show the same condition of things. The explanation of this situation in New England is doubtless the immigration into the factory towns. The further analysis of the census will show of what nationalities this strong

and newly arrived foreign element is made up. In New York the proportion is also low (138.69 to 100) and may be explained by the residuum of immigrants, who, owing to poverty or inertia, remain at the place of landing. The peculiar position of Pennsylvania (152.6 to 100) is difficult to explain, except on the theory that the immigration years ago was very powerful, so that the number of the second generation is large enough to overcome the more recent immigration.

If we turn our attention to the Western states, similar contrasts meet us. Ohio and Indiana seem to have received their complement of immigrants, and it is the second generation which is now dominant. Accordingly we find in Ohio the proportion to be 197.34 to 100, and in Indiana 229.25 to 100. In the same category is Kansas (191.25 to 100). Missouri (206.56 to 100) is a Southern state in many of its characteristics. It is in Wisconsin and Minnesota that we should look for the great strength of the foreign-born. But in Wisconsin the strength of the schooled and schoolable to the foreign-born above the school age is as 167.99 to 100, greater than in any Eastern state except Vermont. Minnesota has a smaller figure (139.98 to 100), showing that the immigration is more recent than in Wisconsin, but still the proportion is higher than in any Eastern state except Vermont and Pennsylvania. Illinois, Michigan and Nebraska stand between Wisconsin and Minnesota, while Iowa, like Kansas, has the characteristics of an old state.

What is the sociological significance of these contrasts? They give us a new standard for measuring the prospect of assimilating the foreign element in different parts of the United States. In Massachusetts the foreign-born whites number 29.19 per cent of the whole population, and in Wisconsin 30.77 per cent. But the proportion of schooled and schoolable in the former is only 116.61, while in the latter it is 167.99, to 100 of the foreign-born above the school age. Is not the task before the state of Wisconsin less arduous than that before the state of Massachusetts? In New York the foreign-born whites number 26.11 per cent of the total popula-

tion ; in Minnesota, 35.87 per cent : but notwithstanding this, the proportion of the schooled and schoolable to the foreign-born above the school age is almost precisely the same, *viz.*, 138.69 and 139.98 to 100. While the foreign-born in Pennsylvania are 16.04 per cent of its population and in Iowa 16.94 per cent, yet the latter has 185.93, and the former only 152.60, of schooled and schoolable to 100 foreign-born above school age. New Hampshire has 19.18 per cent of its population foreign-born, and Nebraska has about the same number ; yet, while

Table showing percentage of foreign-born and foreign-parentage population of school age (5 to 17) to whole school population.

STATES.	PER CENT.	STATES.	PER CENT.
North Atlantic Division .	45.76	North Central Division .	41.45
Maine	24.95	Ohio	30.38
New Hampshire	38.38	Indiana	17.77
Vermont	33.38	Illinois	47.01
Massachusetts	60.51	Michigan	56.11
Rhode Island	62.45	Wisconsin	72.42
Connecticut	54.57	Minnesota	76.41
New York	54.79	Iowa	42.58
New Jersey	48.26	Missouri	22.51
Pennsylvania	32.26	Nebraska	42.14
		Kansas	26.39
		North Dakota	80.32
		South Dakota	61.17

New Hampshire has only 104.87 schooled and schoolable to 100 foreign-born above the school age, the Western state has 156.39 to 100. The contrast between the Eastern and the Western states in this particular is something astonishing.

The task of education imposed upon the several states by the presence of the foreign-born is not quite clearly shown by the foregoing comparison, for the reason that many of the native whites of foreign parentage are already beyond the school age. In order to measure the present burden we must compare the foreign-born of school age plus the native whites of foreign parentage of school age, with the total number of

whites of school age. That comparison is not difficult to make, and is shown in the table opposite.

The significant thing in this table is still the high percentage of some of the Eastern states, such as Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In Massachusetts sixty per cent and in Rhode Island sixty-two per cent of the total white population of school age is composed of foreign whites and the children of foreign whites. New Hampshire is below the two states mentioned, because her foreign population is evidently of the first generation, and largely adult. Connecticut and New York maintain a high percentage. If we turn to the West we see Wisconsin and Minnesota with very high percentages, because they have a large number of both foreign-born persons and native whites of foreign parentage. It is strange that Iowa and Nebraska should be so much lower than Massachusetts, and that Ohio and Kansas should be below an old and conservative New England state like Vermont, which in the other table seemed so free from foreign influence. Indiana is quite exceptional among all the states, and the figures would seem to show that so far as the assimilating influence of education is concerned the task is no longer a difficult one, for less than one-fifth of all the persons of school age are of foreign birth, or the children of foreign-born persons.

Have these figures any sociological importance? In one respect they have. The object of the school system to which the mass of these persons are subjected is to make them intelligent, and intelligent in the American manner. Where the children are of foreign birth, often of a foreign language, the task must be more difficult of accomplishment than when the children are of native birth and of native parentage. With the children of native birth, but of foreign parentage, the obstacles are not so great. Many of them are of parents who have already become more or less American, and a few of them of families which are above the American standard of intelligence. So much may be easily granted. Still, many of these children of native birth and foreign parentage come from homes and social surroundings which are entirely foreign, so that the assimilat-

ing influence of the school upon them is somewhat hindered. It is for this reason that we have classed them with the foreign-born. And it is to be noted that this obstructive force increases more than proportionately to the increase in the ratio of these two classes to the whole body of those of school age. Where the former are few in number, they are able to offer little resistance to the dissolving influence of school and social life. Where they are sufficiently numerous to be able to form a body by themselves superior to the native-born of native parentage, then the resistance they can offer becomes much more serious. For they are sustained not only by their numbers, but also by the presence of a compact body of the foreign-born, their parents, who surround them with all the atmosphere of a foreign country. It may be that even where the children born on this soil are ready to adopt American habits and notions, they will be restrained by their parents. The opposition to the use of the English language in some of our Western states comes, of course, not from the children, but from their parents.

Thus far we have looked only at the proportion of the foreign-born, or the children of the foreign-born, who, according to their age, may be subjected to the assimilating influence of education. The result is encouraging, because it shows that we have to deal, not with the crude immigrants, but with the second generation, which, born on this soil and only foreign by descent, will in all probability be amenable to the assimilating influence. We also see clearly that the task before the different states is not always of the same degree of difficulty, although in all the Northern states it is one of sufficient magnitude. The chance for the assimilating force of education to make itself felt is sufficiently great. It is a further question how far it does make itself felt. Education can be felt only if the foreign-born of school age are in the schools. We have no statistics showing how far this is the case. The commissioner of education reported in 1890 that while the number of children of school age in the United States, according to the census, was 18,543,201, the number of children

enrolled in the public schools was only 12,697,196, and the average daily attendance was 8,153,635.¹ These statistics are of no value for us, because there is no distinction made between the native and the foreign-born.

A second way of answering the question whether the influence of education makes itself felt is by the statistics of illiteracy, with distinction of birth and parentage. All statistics of illiteracy are very rough indications of intelligence, because the test is simply ability to read and write, and the statement of the individual is taken without any control. The census of Massachusetts for 1885 gave some analyses of illiteracy, which may be useful as showing the power and influence of the school system in one of the Eastern states.

The total number of illiterates in Massachusetts in 1885 was 122,263, of whom 13,893, or 11.37 per cent, were native-born, and 108,365, or 88.63 per cent, were foreign-born. That is to say, nearly nine-tenths of the illiteracy in Massachusetts was due to the foreign-born. And, still further, of these 13,893 of native birth, only 6012 were of native parentage, the remainder being of foreign or mixed parentage. As far as the native population of this state is concerned, illiteracy has been practically overcome, the few cases that are left being connected generally with some form of mental or physical infirmity or condition of homelessness and degradation such as exist in every community. Of the total number of illiterates, 54.86 per cent were Irish and 19.87 per cent were French Canadians.

In Massachusetts a person who could read and write any language was counted as literate. But, in addition to the foreign-born illiterates mentioned above, who could not read or write in any language, there were 30,883 persons of ten years of age and over who could read and write only in some language other than English. The French Canadians were the most numerous among these.

Illiteracy among the foreign-born is the more discouraging because it is found among adults, and can thus never be overcome. Of the foreign-born of ten years of age and over, 21.5

¹ Statistical Abstract, 1893, p. 264.

per cent were illiterate. Of these illiterates, 92.81 per cent were twenty years of age and over. This is the reason why it is impossible to look upon education as an assimilating force in the first generation. It only acts on the second generation; and the commonwealth whose foreign population consists mainly, or in a great part, of the newly-come immigrants, has a more difficult task before it than one where the foreign element has already reached the second generation.

These statistics show how important it is that we cherish our educational system, in order that this oncoming generation of the children of the foreign-born may be brought under its influence. The instruction given should be such as will tend to bring these children into the current of our national life, so that the development of social institutions and social ideals shall be harmonious and not discordant. It should be first of all in the English language; for it is absurd to suppose that we shall allow our national unity to be broken up by a diversity of languages. It must be of such a character as to fit the pupils for the duties of citizenship; for in such active duties there is the best training for a common feeling of nationality.

This sort of training is doubtless going on at the present time in thousands of schools. In many the difference between the parentage of the pupils will hardly be noticeable. In others, doubtless, the foreign parentage will offer greater or less obstacles to the reception of the training. Probably statistics will show a greater proportion of illiteracy among those of foreign parentage for some time to come. In Massachusetts, while the native-born of foreign parentage were only 28.49 per cent of all the native-born, the native-born illiterates of foreign parentage were 43.40 per cent of all the native-born illiterates. This disproportion is not necessarily permanent, but is probably a sign of the misfortunes that overtake the children of the foreign-born if they are left without parents and friendless.

The educational influences that lie outside of the school system can only be mentioned in a general way; they cannot be statistically defined. Chief among them are the news-

papers, which are so universally read in the United States. Even those printed in foreign languages, which would seem likely to perpetuate the foreign influence, probably tend to weaken it by introducing their readers to and interesting them in the current events of American life. The theatres, the magazines and books, the popular amusements, the political speeches, even American slang, all have the same tendency in unifying the national ideas, however commonplace or even debasing their influence in other respects may be. The facilities for rapid communication diffuse this influence into the remotest agricultural villages of Swedes and Germans in the Northwest, while it everywhere pervades the daily lives of the great mass of the foreign-born who live in the great cities.

The Exercise of Political Rights. — This has been the second great assimilative force. It has been the policy of the United States to confer upon persons coming to this country with the intention of remaining the same political rights that the natives enjoy. The immigrants have, after a comparatively short probation, been admitted to the right of suffrage and of office-holding and have been treated exactly as if to the manner born. This policy has been based not only upon a general democratic belief in the rights of man and the equality of all men of whatever class or race, but also in the belief that these new-comers desired to cast in their lot with this democracy and that the law-making power was safe in their hands, they being equally interested with the rest of the community in its exercise. And the exercise of this power, with the knowledge it demands, the interest it excites and the responsibility it involves, has justly been regarded as one of the most potent of the influences tending to bring men of different nationalities into one harmonious unity.

The statistics of males of voting age may be subjected to the same manipulation as those of school age which we have just passed in review. We should have the proportion of foreign-born males of voting age, the proportion naturalized, the proportion of the second generation. We should thus discover just what chance the assimilating force of political

rights has to make itself felt. As to the absolute participation of the foreign elements in the voting and as to the effect of that participation, we should require closer analysis and local observation, but we should find as before striking differences between different communities. In some the proportion of the foreign votes would be very large; in others it would be comparatively small. It is not necessary to carry out this study in detail. The chief point of interest is as to how we are to consider the foreign voters of the second generation, that is, the native-born voters of foreign parentage. If we are to look upon them as still foreign or as still in sympathy with the foreign voters, then we must combine their voting strength with that of the foreign-born and count it as representing the foreign vote. In that case the foreign vote would be very strong; in the whole United States it would be 34.77 per cent of the total white vote. In many of the states it constitutes a majority; as for instance in New York, where it would be 52.46 per cent of the total white vote, in Minnesota, 70.49 per cent, and in Wisconsin, 72.50 per cent. But it is not necessary to look upon the voters of the second generation as foreign. In actual life we know that many of them are no more foreign in feeling and sentiment than the native-born of native parentage. If education and the exercise of political rights have any assimilating effect, the natives of foreign parentage ought to be rather an offset than an addition to the foreign vote. If we look at them in this light, then we have 84.45 voters of the second generation to offset every 100 voters of the first generation, or the foreign-born proper.

That the assimilating influence of American life is felt in this second generation and very probably in the first, will appear plain if we consider the contrasts presented by different states. If, for instance, the foreign vote of two generations were "solid" and differed in aspirations and aims from the native vote, would not the political life of such a state as Wisconsin, where there are 263.7 foreign votes to 100 native votes, differ radically from that of a neighboring state like Iowa, where there are only 71.45 foreign votes of two genera-

tions to 100 native votes? The North differs from the South and the West differs from the East, but in neither case would there seem to be any more reasonable ground for difference than in the case of these two Western commonwealths lying side by side. Why should not North Dakota differ materially in the manifestations of its political life from its sister state, South Dakota, when in the former there are 215.45 and in the latter only 125.45 foreign voters of the two generations to 100 of the natives? In New York the foreign vote of two generations, as compared with the native vote, is twice as strong as in Pennsylvania: is there any indication of this in the condition of the two commonwealths? One possible answer to all these queries is, that the second generation of voters has been subjected to the assimilating influence of American life and that they are as much American as foreign. It needs but little exercise of the imagination to picture how radically and peculiarly these communities would differ from each other if the process of assimilation had not gone on—if the second or even the first generation had retained the habits, customs and feelings of the home country.

I am aware that this argument lacks scientific certainty and precision. It may be objected that, the foreign element being composed of different nationalities, there is no reason why it should be solid even in the first generation. Swedes and Italians are no closer to each other than either is to the native-born element. The term foreign-born, therefore, is too general and conceals as many differences as likenesses. This is true; but it is only another proof of the controlling and assimilating influence of American institutions and American life, which prevents on the one hand the union of these elements on the basis of their common opposition to American institutions (an opposition for which abundant reason might be found in the general unlikeness of American and European life), and on the other hand an internecine contest among these different elements on the basis of their own unlikenesses. In other words, if it were not for the powerful influence of American life, we might conceive of these nationalities as fractions of a

parliamentary opposition, which, although radically opposed to one another, might occasionally unite in order to obtain an opportunist victory against the majority, only to fall into a violent struggle for the possession of the spoils. That this does not happen, and still further that the opposition does not become traditional and irreconcilable from generation to generation, seems to me to show in a convincing, if not a precise way, that the second generation is already Americanized.

It has been suggested, also, that these differences will appear more rather than less plainly as the immigration becomes older. The first immigrants are too much occupied with making good their economic and social position to care much for the exercise of political power. They are, moreover, unfamiliar with the political machinery, and cannot make their real influence felt. As they live here longer, and become conscious of the power in their hands, they will use it for the realization of desires which have hitherto lain dormant in their breasts. We may, therefore, expect greater differences of opinion and more bitter class struggles in the future than have appeared in the past. The hereditary national characteristics, which have hitherto been concealed under an apparent conformity, will then reveal themselves in full force.

That there are to be violent class struggles in the future seems very probable; and that certain nationalities are particularly prone to such contests, especially those of a socialistic and anarchistic nature, is often asserted. But these struggles are not primarily on the basis of nationality. They affect the native-born as well as the foreign-born, although possibly not to the same degree. They are primarily class struggles, and have to do with the possession of wealth, which appeals to all nationalities and to all men, whether native-born or foreign-born. The effect of such a struggle is not so much to split up the nation, as to destroy it, by introducing antitheses which no system of institutions can ever make reconcilable. And the very struggle may have one effect which will be unifying; for so far as it shall be conducted under American forms,

namely, by appeal to the voters, the assimilating influence of American institutions will make itself felt.

Finally, it may be objected that a more minute study of the legislation and political life of the different commonwealths would reveal differences which do not appear at a superficial glance. This very likely is true; and such minute study is eminently desirable, and would probably bring forth fruit. But the fact that such differences are not apparent at first glance shows that an influence is present which works in the general direction of assimilation. Against this general conclusion it is incumbent upon those who deny its validity to array the particular facts.

Other Influences. — The social influences other than those already examined are more difficult to grasp statistically, but I believe they would be found working under the same conditions, and that we could probably infer the same results. Criminal statistics have been extensively employed to show the evils which we suffer from indiscriminate and unrestricted immigration. The figures are often used without sufficient care, but it is very possible that the burden of criminality and pauperism is increased, absolutely, by the coming of the immigrants. But when we consider that the immigrants are predominantly adults; that they are poor and ignorant; that they must include many of the failures of the Old World, who are often either directly or indirectly assisted to leave home; that they land here without friends to aid them, or public opinion to restrain them: when we consider all these things, it is surprising that the criminals and paupers are not more numerous than they are. Is it not probable that the social environment soon gets hold of the immigrants in this respect, and that they learn speedily to conform to the sentiment of the community?

To sum up, then, it seems to me that the statistics go to show that the foreign element in this country is getting to a position where it is especially amenable to the influence of the social environment. Owing to the unorganized character of

the immigration; to the lack of political and social connection between the immigrants and the home-country; to the variety of elements which more or less neutralize one another; and to the powerful influence of the established institutions,—assimilation to the one type is the natural and almost inevitable result. We have negative evidence to show that the process of assimilation is going on; for otherwise we should have radical differences among our different commonwealths. It may be inferred, also, as it seems to me, although the proof is not yet altogether complete, that race character is a much less potent force in race mixture than physical and social environment; that what we are to look for is not so much a mixture of blood by inter-marriage, or the influence of climate in reducing men to the same physical characteristics, as the influence of common occupations and common methods of satisfying material needs in developing similar mental faculties and the same character; that even more powerful than this influence of physical environment is the force of the social environment, giving men of different nationalities the same intellectual training, the same habits of political and social action, and, eventually, the same social aspirations and ideals. We are to look for the future American nationality, not in a capricious intermingling of different breeds of men, nor in the survival of a complex of institutions brought together here from all over the world, but in the assimilating power of a social environment, adapted, it is true, to the physical environment, but originally established by the colonists, and acting with almost irresistible force upon successive generations of native-born and immigrants alike. It is not in unity of blood, but in unity of institutions and social habits and ideals that we are to seek that which we call nationality.

RICHMOND MAYO-SMITH.